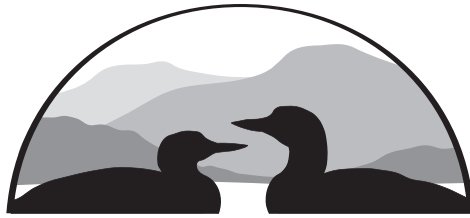


New Hampshire Bird Records



Spring 2011

Vol. 30, No. 1



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Spring 2011

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Cover Photo: Ruff (foreground) with Greater Yellowlegs by Len Medlock, 04/21/11, Chapman's Landing, Stratham, NH.

New Hampshire Bird Records is published quarterly by New Hampshire Audubon's Conservation Department. Thank you to the many observers who submit their sightings to NH eBird (www.ebird.org/nh), the source of data for this publication. Records are selected for publication and not all species reported will appear in the issue. The published sightings typically represent the highlights of the season. All records are subject to review by the NH Rare Birds Committee and publication of reports here does not imply future acceptance by the Committee. Please contact the Managing Editor if you would like to report your sightings but are unable to use NH eBird.

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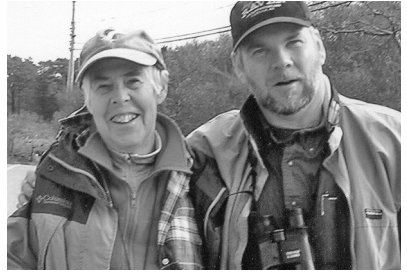
Published by New Hampshire Audubon's Conservation Department



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IN HONOR OF
Betty Densmore

This issue of *New Hampshire Bird Records*, with its color cover, is sponsored by Pat Niswander on behalf of the Concord Bird and Wildflower Club in memory of long time member, Betty Densmore. Betty was an avid birder and enjoyed the many field trips that the Club offered. She will be greatly missed.



Betty Densmore on a birding field trip to Cape Cod, MA with Robert A. Quinn.

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27, as the system was moving eastward, the warm front was progressing northward. It looks as if it stalled across New Hampshire early and then lifted through but, even then, winds at hawk level would have already switched to southerly. There was a fairly strong wind from the south that developed during the day. Concord reached 20 mph. The high temperature there was 81, compared to only 59 on April 26.

So . . . let's all make a pledge to scan the skies next April 27 and see if we can witness another spectacular hawk flight.

Data Sources

New Hampshire Bird Records and archives, circa 1960 through 2008. Audubon Society of New Hampshire, Concord, New Hampshire.

New Hampshire Hawk Watch Coordinator Archive 1988-2005 compiled by Steve Mirick and Susan Fogleman on behalf of the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA)

HawkCount.org. Online raptor migration database of the Hawk Migration Association of North America.

Iain MacLeod is Executive Director of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center in Holderness, New Hampshire and former Chairman of the Board of the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Iain has birded in New Hampshire for more than 23 years and is a member of the New Hampshire Bird Records Editorial Team and the New Hampshire Rare Birds Committee. He lives in Ashland.

Photo Gallery

Forget the Whales, Watch (out for) the Birds!

by Jon Woolf

All photos were taken during the 05/28/11 whalewatch aboard the M/V Granite State out of Rye Harbor, NH.

Granite State Whale Watch's first whalewatch of the 2011 season on May 21 was a mixed bag; awful foggy weather, but several good birds, including Leach's Storm-Petrels and Red-necked Phalaropes. So I decided to go again a week later, on May 28, in search of better weather and better birds. Steve and Jane Mirick had the same idea, so we formed a little group of three birders among the 25 or so whalewatchers.

Sadly, the weather was no better. If anything, it was slightly worse; thick fog at least five miles out from shore, with visibility at times under a quarter mile. Farther



Black-throated Green Warbler by Jon Woolf.



Black-throated Green Warbler resting on a whalewatcher's shoulder.
Photo by Stephen R. Mirick.



Blackburnian Warbler that landed on a whalewatcher's arm. Photo by Stephen R. Mirick.

offshore, it cleared somewhat, but visibility remained under a mile and a half. Also, the choppy seas made several passengers mildly seasick. In the middle of this fog, twenty miles out to sea, however, we became a beacon for a miniature fallout of migrating birds. Over the next half-hour or so, we tallied three species of warblers, Red-eyed Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, Chimney Swift, Eastern Kingbird, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and an unidentified *Empidonax* flycatcher. They were all very lost, very tired, and very hungry, all of which made them utterly uninterested in anything as plebeian as avoiding us humans.

They were flying around the boat, landing on the boat, and landing on the people on the boat.

It was just plain surreal, that's the only word to describe the experience. We had found whales just about the same time these birds started appearing, so the boat's whale expert was on the loudspeaker talking about the great show (and it was a great show!) being put on by three humpback whales feeding all around the boat. Few of us on the upper deck, however, could focus on the whales because there were warblers flitting about, landing here and there, hawking flies, zooming past within inches of your face...

They had no interest in staying out of the way. If someone had moved the wrong way at the wrong moment, the bird could easily have gotten hurt. I had the Blackburnian Warbler land on my camera. Jane had one of the Black-throated Green Warblers land on her binoculars. After a moment, it moved on to perch atop another passenger's cap. We watched them hunt some flies that were hanging around – a warbler eating something as big as a large housefly is a somewhat impressive sight! A Common Yellowthroat flew into the main cabin and landed on the floor, forcing one of the crew to very carefully direct it back outside lest it be stepped on, where it decided it preferred being on her arm.

The warbler show was amazing all by itself, but the birding gods weren't quite done with us yet. There was still another bird flying around, which was to provide the perfect capper for the day. This bird made its first appearance not long before the warblers appeared, flying past the boat at high speed and fairly long range. None of us



Common Yellowthroat on a crew member's arm, by Jon Woolf.



White-winged Dove as it flew by the boat, by Jon Woolf.

could tell what it was, except that it appeared to have a dovish shape. Shortly after the warblers departed, the mystery bird returned. This time, Steve saw enough to think it was something *very* rare, a **White-winged Dove**. This bird's normal breeding range is Florida, the Southwestern United States and northern Mexico. There was only one previous record for it in Dover, New Hampshire, July 1-3, 2006.

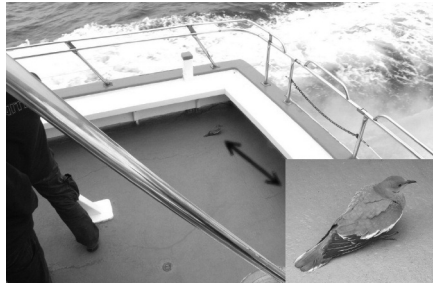
About half an hour later, as we were headed back to port, the bird came by yet again. This time it approached from astern, following the boat's wake, then came up and flew alongside. I still had my camera out, so when Steve yelled I was able to get on it and start taking pictures. Steve and Jane were studying it with their binoculars while I clicked away and Steve kept telling me to "keep shooting, get all the pictures you can, this is amazing." In the next five minutes, I took about fifty pictures. Plenty of them were good enough to confirm the identification, and a few were better than that.

As it turned out though, getting flight shots wasn't *quite* as critical as all that. The dove looked at us from one side, crossed over to the other, dropped back a few feet, then folded its wings and **landed on the deck**.

It stayed there, apparently resting, all the way back into harbor, while Steve kept guard to be sure people didn't scare it away. Once we were in cell phone range, we called several other birders, who called others, and they all met us when we got back to the Rye Harbor dock, about 30 minutes after the dove had landed. All that time, the dove never moved. It sat there on deck for about twenty more minutes, letting us all get good looks and many more pictures too. Finally, it decided it had given us enough photo-ops, flew off and landed in a tree on the harbor grounds. It was still there when the last of us left about half an hour later.

Score for the day: the best looks I've ever gotten at Black-

headed back to port, the bird came by yet again.



White-winged Dove riding the boat back to Rye Harbor. Photo by Stephen R. Mirick.



Thanks to the birder communication network Jason Lambert (r) and Len Medlock (l) were waiting at the dock to photograph the White-winged Dove when it arrived back at the dock in Rye Harbor. Photo by Stephen R. Mirick.

throated Green and Blackburnian Warblers, my first Great Shearwater of the year, a Northern Fulmar, three whales, and the second White-winged Dove ever recorded in New Hampshire. For a day that started out as a foggy mess, that's pretty good.

Jon Woolf is a computer programmer by day, and a birder, photographer, and amateur writer weekends and evenings. He volunteers for NH Audubon, primarily running a handful of birding workshops and trips every year.

Field Notes

The Will to Survive

by Christine Sheridan

On the afternoon of May 11, 2011, while birding at Field's Grove in Nashua, I watched a lively bevy of newly hatched Wood Duck ducklings with their somberly beautiful brown mother. I counted the hatchlings carefully. Ten Wood Duck babies! Idly, I watched a little bit of flotsam, perhaps a bit of brown bark and yellowish wood, swirl out from a culvert and bob along down the rushing stream. As it approached, I quickly realized that the "bark chip" was a tiny, day-old Wood Duck. I watched in suspense as the fuzzy little creature was borne along the turbulent stream.

The duckling appeared to have no concept of its dangerous position. Suddenly, it appeared to realize its plight. Peeping frantically it spun around in the water, and, began to paddle upstream against the current. Amazingly, it made progress. Over and over, it was swept back by the current; over and over it battled back upstream. The strength and persistence of this newborn were astonishing. Eventually the duckling reached the rushing waters of the culvert. I watched both sides alternately, wondering how it could possibly best the turbulence and emerge on the opposite side. The duckling did not emerge on the marsh side upstream. I concluded that it had been pulled under by the current. Sadly, I began to walk back to the car. It can be hard to remain dispassionate when watching such a brave struggle for survival!

But then I heard....Peeping! I turned towards the peeping sound. The duckling had not been drowned. Apparently it had been swept to the shore and it now scampered up the slope, across the footpath, and into the streamside bushes on the marsh side. Still peeping, it launched itself across the stream. The little Wood Duck seemed near exhaustion as it tacked across the current. If its paddling paused for an instant, it was pulled back towards the treacherous bridge. But finally it made it into the calmer shallows. It continued peeping for its family, but I lost sight of it among the emergent growth. I looked towards a stalking Great Blue Heron. I thought of the local Sharpshinned and Red-tailed Hawks. I considered Snapping Turtles, and the great distance across the marsh to the only Wood Duck family I had observed. I decided I had seen enough for the day, and silently wishing the little bird well, I left Field's Grove. Despite its valiant struggle, I didn't have too much hope for the hatchling.

After a rainy spell, I returned to the Grove. A family of Wood Ducks caught my eye. One, two, ...eight, nine, ten... eleven ducklings; eleven, week-old Wood Ducks. I think the little guy might have made it!

Abbreviations Used

BBC	Brookline Bird Club	R.	River
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey	Rd.	Road
CA	Conservation Area	Rt.	Route
CC	Country Club	SF	State Forest
CFT	NH Audubon Chapter Field Trip	SP	State Park
FT	Field Trip	SPNHF	Society for the Protection of NH Forests, Concord
IBA	Important Bird Area	T&M	Thompson & Meserves (Purchase)
L.	Lake	TNC	The Nature Conservancy
LPC	Loon Preservation Committee	WMA	Wildlife Management Area
NA	Natural Area	WMNF	White Mountain National Forest
NHA	New Hampshire Audubon	WS	NHA Wildlife Sanctuary
NHBR	New Hampshire Bird Records	~	approximately
NHRBC	NH Rare Birds Committee	WTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge		
PO	Post Office		

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